

<b>Descriptor Term:</b> <b>RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Descriptor:</b> <b>JJK / KF-EE</b>	<b>Issued:</b> <b>7-17-13</b>
	<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>Issued:</b>

  

**I. Rankin County School District – Official Policy Statement – Religion in the Public Schools:**

It is the policy of the Rankin County School Board that school activities conducted during instructional hours should neither advance, endorse or inhibit any religion; should be primarily for secular purposes and should not obligate or coerce any person into participation in a religious activity.

**II. Rankin County School District – Official Policy Statement – Use of School Facilities (Buildings):**

It is the policy of the Rankin County School District to allow use of school facilities for noncurriculum-related purposes for meeting of students as well as approved non-student residents of Rankin County, on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis as to content of the requested meeting, during noninstructional hours, provided that:

1. The school may charge a rental or use fee for nonstudent meetings, on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis as to content of the requested meeting.
2. The school may prohibit approval of the use of school facilities by nonstudents if the school officials determine that the nonstudent user has and will continue to cause disruption or violence to the ordinary operation of the school, or if the school facility is needed for other educational purposes.
3. Any request for use of school facilities by a student organization during school hours must comply with requirements of the Policy Statement (Religion in Public Schools) above and as set forth in Paragraph I.

**III. Rankin County School District – Official Policy Statement – Student Meeting During Noninstructional Time:**

The Rankin County School District recognizes that noncurriculum-related student organizations are a traditional and vital part of a student's education, and the Rankin County School District intends to provide a limited open forum during noninstructional hours which does not deny equal access or a fair opportunity for student meetings on the basis of religious, political, or philosophical content provided that:

- a. The meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;
- b. There is no sponsorship, endorsement, or coercion of the meeting by the school, the government, or their agents or employees;

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- c. Employees or agents of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity;
- d. The meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of student groups.

The term "sponsorship" includes the act by the school or its employees of promoting, endorsing, compelling attendance at, leading or participating in a meeting. The assignment of a teacher or other school employee to a meeting for custodial purposes or to maintain order, does not constitute sponsorship.

The term "meeting" includes those activities of student organizations which are permitted under a school's limited open forum and which are not directly related to the school curriculum. The term "noninstructional time" means time set aside by the school before or after or between actual classroom instruction time.

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